

PROCEEDINGS AT THE FORMATION

OF THE

AFRICAN EDUCATION SOCIETY:

Instituted at Washington, December 28, 1829.

WITH

AN ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT,

BY THE BOARD OF MANAGERS.

WASHINGTON:

WASHINGTON:

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1830.

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REPORT.

An assemblage of citizens of the District, and members of Congress, invited to confer together on the subject of establishing a Society for the Education of Negroes of Colour, for influence and usefulness in Africa, on the 29th of December, 1829; the object of the meeting having been stated by the Rev. Mr. GURLEY; on motion of Rev. J. C. HARTIN, GOIN WALKER JONES was called to the Chair, and Mr. GURLEY appointed Secretary.

After the exchange of opinions in regard to the subject proposed for consideration, on motion by Mr. GURLEY, it was

Resolved, That it is expedient to form, and that we do hereby form, a Society, to prepare, by a suitable education, young persons of colour for usefulness in Africa.

The Society then went into committee of the whole, Rev. Mr. HAWLEY in the Chair, to consider and decide on a Constitution; and after considerable discussion, and many amendments, the following was proposed to the Society, and finally adopted:

CONSTITUTION.

I. This Society shall be called the *African Education Society of the United States*.

II. The exclusive object of this Society shall be, to afford to persons of colour destined to Africa, such an education, in Letters, Agriculture, and the Mechanic Arts, as may best qualify them for usefulness and influence in Africa.

III. Every individual who shall annually contribute one dollar to the Society, shall be a member; and a contribution, at any one time, of twenty dollars shall constitute life membership.

IV. The officers of this Society shall be, a President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Recorder, and a Board of Managers, composed of the abovementioned officers and twelve other members of the Society, to be elected at the annual meeting: any five of whom shall constitute a quorum.

V. The Annual Meeting of this Society shall be on the first Monday in December.

VI. The Board of Managers shall conduct the business of the Society, and take such measures as they may think proper, or as shall be directed by the Society, to effect its objects; shall convene at such times as they may deem expedient, or when requested by the President or any three members; shall report annually to the Society; and shall have power to fill up, from time to time, all vacancies that may happen in their own body, or in any of the offices of the Society.

VII. The Vice Presidents, according to seniority, or otherwise one of the Managers, shall perform the duties of the President in case of his absence.

VIII. The Secretary shall take minutes of the proceedings, prepare and publish notices, and perform such other duties as the Board or Society shall direct. The Recorder shall aid the Secretary when occasion requires.

IX. The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of the funds of the Society, keep the accounts, and discharge such other similar duties as may be required by the Board of Managers.

X. Every Society that shall be formed auxiliary to the parent institution, shall be entitled to attend and vote by delegation at all meetings of the Society.

XI. This Constitution shall be unalterable, except at the annual meetings of the Society, and by a majority of two-thirds of the members present.

ON MOTION, IT WAS

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to nominate a list of Officers for this Society. The following list was finally adopted:

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY.

President.

Rt. Rev. WILLIAM MEADE, of Virginia.

Vice Presidents.

Gen. WALTER JONES, of Washington,

Hon. THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, of New Jersey,

FRANCIS S. KEY, Esq. of Georgetown, D. C.

Hon. Judge McLEAN, of Ohio,

Rev. ELIPHALET NOTT, D. D. of New York,

GERRIT SMITH, Esq. of New York,

Gen. C. F. MERRILL, of Virginia,
Rev. JOHN H. MERR, D. D. of Virginia,
Rev. Bishop CHURCHMAN, of D. C.,
WILLIAM MAXWELL, Esq. of Virginia,
Rev. NATHAN LORD, D. D. of N. H.,
WILLIAM H. FITZHUGH, Esq. of Virginia,
Rev. JAMES MILNOR, D. D. of New York,
Rev. Dr. LINDSLEY, of Tennessee,
ELLIOTT CRESSON, Esq. of Philadelphia,
Rev. WILLIAM WINANS, of Missi.
Rev. HERMAN HUMPHREY, D. D. of Mass.
ARTHUR TAPPAN, Esq. of New York,
Rev. CHARLES P. McILVAINE, of New York.

Secretary—ISAAC GERR, of Washington.

Treasurer—RICHARD SMITH, Esq. of Washington.

Recorder—JOHN KENNEDY, Esq. of Washington.

Managers.

Rev. WILLIAM HAWLEY, of Washington,
WILLIAM WILLIAMSON, Esq. of Georgetown, D. C.,
Rev. JOHN N. CAMPBELL, of Washington,
Rev. JAMES McVEAN, of Georgetown, D. C.,
B. L. LEAR, Esq. of Washington,
Rev. WALTER COLTON, of Washington,
Rev. R. R. GURLEY, of Washington,
MICHAEL NOURSE, Esq. of Washington,
WILLIAM C. RIDGELY, Esq. of Georgetown, D. C.,
JOHN COYLE, Jr. Esq. of Washington,
Rev. J. N. DANFORTH, of Washington,
Rev. THOMAS BROOKE, of Georgetown, D. C.

ADDRESS.

At a time when objects of benevolence, so many and so great, press upon public attention, and call loudly for public patronage; and when the eye of jealousy is to a considerable extent threatening hostility to general associations for the accomplishment of some of these great and godlike purposes; it would ill become the Members and Managers of the African Education Society, to commence their arduous enterprise, and to solicit the public favor and public support, without being able to offer an unequivocal and ample apology.

We feel great reluctance to give offence or alarm, by associating together, to any of the sincere friends of our common country. But the object we have in view is one, as we believe, and as we trust it will appear, which it would be hard-hearted to neglect, and cruel to hinder; and we cannot conceive how it is possible that it should be attained by insulated individual effort. All History does not furnish the shadow of a warrant for the slightest hope of such an achievement.

Since the commencement of the enterprise, in 1817, which was to open an outlet for the unfortunate population, who had been torn from their homes by the hand of violence, and entailed upon us by the mistaken policy of the mother country; and which was not only to restore to Africa her lost children, but to quench the flames of war, and dry up the streams of devastation, and fountains of blood, in that persecuted and ill-fated country; and to confer upon it the blessings of peace, and refinement, and religion, and liberty, the friends of that great design have been continually and deeply impressed with the importance of preparing the destined emigrants, by a suitable training, for prosperity and usefulness in Africa. They reasoned, and reasoned rightly, that if without such preparation they were wholly unfit, as is universally admitted, for freedom, and for the lowest employments, in this country, much more were they unfit to stem the tide of barbarism, to exercise the difficult and hardly tenable functions of self-government, to become the leaders, teachers, and rulers of barbarous people, the enlightened citizens, the wise founders and support-

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ers, of the rising nations of Africa. Hence various attempts have been made, from time to time, to devise and execute plans for the attainment of this highly important and desirable object: and the association, who by their constitution were not empowered to turn their efforts in that direction, and to whom the entire interests of Africa, here, have hitherto been entrusted, have hailed those attempts with their warmest approbation, and their best wishes that they might prove successful. It is well known, that the active and powerful mind of General Harper, was much exercised on this subject during his life, and that he made some partial attempts to carry his views into execution. There is reason to believe, from the resolution and energy of his character that death alone prevented him from pursuing, to ultimate success, an object to which he was so warmly and sincerely devoted.

An Institution was commenced some years ago, for the purpose of African education, at Newark, in New Jersey. Owing, however, to the want of sufficient support or perhaps still more to the lack of suitable subjects of education, its success has not heretofore been so great as its friends had reason to expect and desire, and as the exigencies of the cause most imperiously demanded. A Society has also been formed at Hartford, in Connecticut, devoted exclusively to the higher stages of African education. Its operations, up to the present time, have been exceedingly limited; not for the want of interest, or the want of funds; but for the almost total destitution of suitable subjects. Colored persons on the advanced stage of education, which they require for admission, can rarely be found.

With these institutions it is not our design or desire to interfere at all: but to co-operate with them, and to render them every assistance within our power. The Hartford Institution, especially, we hope are long to supply with youth prepared to enter it: and thus to remove the only apparent obstacle to its complete prosperity: and should that at Newark assume the same character, we hope to afford it also the same facilities.

It is our belief that efforts have heretofore been too partial and local in their character; and to this circumstance alone can we attribute the want of success. A common interest has not been felt: general concert in action has not been attained: the

opinion of the benevolent community has not been awakened. It is our hope and desire to excite all the interest and energies of the country, which can possibly be directed towards the attainment of the great and interesting object which we have in view: to gather information and influence from every possible source; to combine and concentrate their power: to present them to the public eye, and to bring them to act upon the public feeling: and especially, by a steady advancement, as fast as the means will allow, towards the object proposed, to evince the invaluable benefits of the undertaking, and thus afford the best possible reward for its support, and the highest encouragement for more extensive and more ardent effort.

It is the design of the Society, not, in the manner of a day school, to take charge of the youth entrusted to them, for a few hours daily, and then dismiss them to dissipate, among idle and vicious companions, the slight impressions made upon them, and thus to blast, every night and morning, the germs of sober and industrious habits; but to train them up entirely, as far as practicable, from early childhood; to make constant and untiring inroads on their wrong habits and propensities; to subject them to a steady, mild and salutary discipline; to exercise towards them a kind and parental care, guarding against the approach of every insidious and hurtful influence; to give them an intimate practical acquaintance with agriculture, or some one of the mechanic arts, most likely to be useful in Africa; to instruct them thoroughly in all the branches of a common school education; to endow them with industrious, active and manly habits; and to inspire them with virtuous, generous and honorable sentiments: in fine, to form their whole character, and render it, as far as possible, such as will qualify them to become pioneers in the renovation of Africa. Manual labor will of course ultimately aid in the support, and diminish the expense, of the establishment. But in its commencement, on account of the necessary preparation of implements and materials, it is essential to its success that a good deal should be expended. An enlightened, humane and liberal community must decide, whether it shall surmount the obstacles which stand in its way, and obtain an existence real and greatly efficient, among things that *are*, as well as in the designs and hopes of its projectors.

Every precaution will be taken to avoid the influence or discouragement of day schools for Africans in the States where all are free. It is perceived that they also are tending to the same great object, though in a less ready, and less effectual manner. What if the colored people in these states are now prejudiced against emigration to Africa? Enlightening and enlarging their minds, and correcting and quickening their moral faculties, will remove those prejudices; will help them to discern, and lead them to promote their own best interests, and to bear across the Atlantic the means of freedom, prosperity and happiness, to their kindred according to the flesh."

Special reference will also be had to the condition and wishes of the slave States. In most of them it is a prevailing sentiment, that it is not safe to furnish slaves with the means of instruction. Black as we lament the reasons for this sentiment, and the apparent necessity of keeping a single fellow creature in ignorance, we willingly leave to others the consideration and the remedy of this evil, in view of the overwhelming magnitude of the remaining objects before us. But it is well known that very many masters are desirous to liberate their slaves in such a way as to improve their condition: and we are confident that such masters will rejoice to find the means by which those slaves may be educated in a situation by themselves, without the danger of exerting an unfavorable influence around them: and instead of creating disquiet in this country, may convey peace and joy to Africa. In proof of this opinion, we are gratified to state that a gentleman, who is a slave holder, and an officer of this Society, has already offered the gratuitous use of a farm, for the accommodation of such an establishment.

A desire to give "liberty to the captive," has prevailed, and does still prevail, to a very great extent, throughout the country. It owes its existence both to a sense of justice and to feelings of humanity. It has been more efficient too, strange as it may appear, in the southern than the northern States; for the reproached South has given liberty to more, in proportion to her white population, by the mere influence of this desire, than the North has done in consequence of this desire, the most obvious self-interest, and the force of law put together. Proof of this point requires only a glance at the census, where is shown the

our peaceful, virtuous, and industrious people; all of whom are entitled to their freedom, or the descendants of freedmen. In the South, however, its progress has been arrested before the consummation of that great event to which it was most obviously and rapidly tending. There was a need of an inquiry, which the North had never instituted, *whether freedom in itself alone, without some redeeming concomitant, was a practical blessing to those for whom it was as such designed.* The fact was most glaring, without an inquiry, that the same shackles which bound them, fastened them to the resources of the soil, and the interests of the community. These were broken, and the incentives of authority, the weight of ignorance, the want of better incentives, and the untried power of grateful but ruinous idleness. The state, which, however elevated in theory, was in fact more degraded and more miserable than that of bondage. In addition to this, pauperism, with the numerous evils of corrupt and seductive indolence, threatened to impose its sluggish weight upon a groaning community. The common sense of mankind and the genius of Christianity equally demanded, that *practical results* should be made the tests of justice and humanity. It appeared that nothing could in reality be less like equitable restoration, than throwing away. Hence, the progress of emancipation was, for the time, most righteously arrested. Still, without doubt, the same desire, once so manifest, yet exists, and even with augmented power: and there is every reason to believe, that when present impediments shall be removed, and the manumission of the slave will improve his condition, it will be far more than its former activity. The call then is most emphatic to release this heaven-born desire from its prison house, and let it again proceed with its work of beneficence—a work which by every other instrument may be attempted in vain. It is certain that to improve the condition of liberated slaves, it is necessary to elevate their moral and intellectual character. The last hope, then, of the colored race, is embraced in the design of this Society.

Improvement, in the progress from barbarism, is so gradual from year to year and from age to age, that its advance, at any one moment, like the motion of the sun, is imperceptible. Yet by comparison in its different stages, we discern the immense

disparity between the glimmering dawn over the bridge and glorious meridian. The yeomanry of this country stand up in all the consciousness of superiority, and feel as if the high distinction with which they are favored, were an attribute of their nature, or the direct gift of the Deity: forgetful that their own ancestors, but a few ages ago, were in a state of barbarism, that would have hardly honored an African origin; and that the race has emerged from such a condition only by the slow process of moral and intellectual improvement. Hence the immense power of education is underrated entirely: and the colored-race, just brought from a savage country, and placed in sight of advantages which they cannot enjoy, are regarded, to a great extent, as incapable of a similar advancement. This prejudice, founded in the first instance on grounds almost wholly gratuitous, and contrary to general principles, must soon give way entirely to facts, which are already apparent, and which are now in a rapid course of further development.

The immense advantages of moral and intellectual cultivation, become most glaringly obvious by a recurrence to history and biography. In almost every instance where communities or individuals have stood pre-eminent, they owed their pre-eminence chiefly to moral or intellectual improvement. The Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans; were no less remarkable for learning than for power. This may be said with equal truth of nearly all the great men of antiquity, and much more of those who in modern times have caused the world to feel their influence. Intellectual and moral cultivation made Ashmun what he was: and to cause the influence of such men to be felt throughout the African continent, is the aim and the hope of this Society.

There are several reasons, which appear not only weighty, but altogether decisive, why such a Society should be located in the capital of the country. In addition to the general convenience of its central position, it is in a district belonging in common to all the States, where none can complain of interference, or attach to it the idea of merely local importance: it affords to all parts of the country, through Members of Congress, the means of an intimate acquaintance with its character, measures, and success; by the same means, many important helps may be

all, it can avail itself directly of the best channel of information between this country and Africa. If it were farther north, it would not be so easily accessible by slaves that are to be liberated and sent to Africa; and the constitutions of those under its care, would not be so well prepared for the attacks of African disease and the dangers of an African climate. If it were farther south, it might fail to excite a northern interest, and by exerting an unfavorable influence on slaves, and waking the apprehensions of their masters, it might even blast its prospects in the southern section of the country.

We appeal, then, with respectful confidence, to the humane and merciful throughout our country. We most earnestly solicit their encouragement, co-operation and support. We entreat the Editors of public Journals to bestow on the subject their calm and candid attention; to yield it their personal favor and influence; and to send forth upon the winds of heaven all useful information respecting it. We entreat Ministers of the Gospel to bring their consecrated talents to bear in the promotion of its interests, and in the attainment of an object, which cannot but be dear to them and their Master. We entreat all classes of the community to contribute their aid and exert their influence in such ways as to them may appear best and most effectual. Considerations the most powerful urge the appeal. By all the horrors of the slave trade; by the wrongs and sufferings of Africa, inflicted by the hands of Americans; by her cruel and incessant wars which they have excited, and which have desolated her towns and cities, by the blood of murdered millions, by the relics of hundreds of thousands thrown from American ships, and strewed upon the bed of the Atlantic—we call upon our country, in its individual and collective capacity, to make a voluntary, though wholly inadequate retribution to those whom they have injured, and to perform an act of justice, of duty, and of mercy, to the people of Africa.

Resolutions of the Board.

Resolved, That the funds of this Society shall be chiefly appropriated to the education of slaves, placed at their disposal by their masters, on the condition, after their education and liberation, of their emigrating to Africa.

as practicable, by the pupils, their masters, parents or guardians, and they will go to Africa when their education shall be completed.

Extract of a Letter to a Gentleman in Virginia

The Managers of the African Education Society tender to you their grateful acknowledgments for the substantial proof of your favor, which has been received, and for the implicit confidence which you have kindly expressed in the justness of their views and the integrity of their motives. They regard this confidence as one of the highest proofs of friendship. Still they are desirous that even the enemies of the cause, and much more those friends who are qualified to act as its wisest advocates and ablest defenders, should see clearly and fully the ground upon which it rests; the nature and extent of the objections which bear against it, and of the inducements which urge to its advancement. To such friends, too, they look for at least a portion of that light which the difficulty of the subject requires, as well as for the influence necessary to give it favor in the view of the community.

The subjects mentioned in your letter had been already discussed and settled, as it was supposed, in a satisfactory manner. Your notice of them again called them up; but the Board cannot yet discover sufficient reasons for changing their views. They are all ardent friends of the Colonization Society; but further than this the two Societies are not connected at all. It seems difficult, then, to perceive, how the fate of one can be *mainly* dependent on the fate of the other. It may seem as if a new object proposed with regard to Africa, and a consequent division of interest, might diminish the already meager support of the Colonization Society; but facts of constant occurrence in this country, go to prove the reverse. Nor can this be deemed a subject of wonder, when it is considered that all the great objects of charity receive, as yet, but about the average amount of five cents a year from each inhabitant of the country. In view, then, of the acknowledged liberality of the American people, there can be no sufficient objection to presenting a greater number of deserving objects before them.

It is true, that prejudices against the new Society, may, and probably will, to some extent, be directed against the Colonization Society. But for this there can be no sufficient reason, for the Societies are wholly distinct. Besides, the Colonization Society has, in its infancy, excited far greater opposition than it will ever hereafter be likely to meet with. It is doubtless highly desirable that the Education Society should encounter its own difficulties, and rest on its own merits: and so far as it can possibly be kept from implication with others, it will be done. There is even then hardly a doubt that it will surmount, by prudent management, the probable opposition which it is destined to meet with.

serviceable to the Colonization Society: It is already obvious, that the prosperity of this society must depend, to a very great extent, on the character and progress of the colony. It is equally obvious that the success of the colony depends entirely on the influence and efforts of well educated men. It is the whole business of the Education Society to furnish them: so that in point of view, for any indirect and partial injury which it may occasion to the Colonization Society, the entire result of its efforts, and weight of its influence, will operate directly to advance the interests of that society.

There are indeed many powerful reasons why the means of educating colonists should be expended within the limits of the colony. But it is at least questionable, whether colonial institutions could obtain, to so great an extent, the patronage of the American public. It is still more questionable whether masters would send their young slaves there to be educated. But the consideration which seems above all others decisive, is, that colored instructors suitably qualified, cannot yet be found in sufficient numbers for the immediate wants of the colony itself: and to send out white instructors, would doubtless incur a greater sacrifice of life than would be warranted, at present, by the greater comparative advantages. It must be remembered that no white person has yet continued alive in the colony more than six or eight years. The object, if it could not be attained in any other way, would doubtless justify a far greater sacrifice. But it is believed that it can be essentially attained by institutions in this country. The society, however, will render their views on this subject as full and accurate as possible, and whenever there are no sufficient objections, their means will at once be transferred to Africa. It is believed, however, that this cannot be the case, till there shall be a sufficient number of competent colored instructors.

The subject of African education, though beyond all dispute immensely important, must for some time to come, be to a great extent *experimental*, and may be of very great utility. The great object of the Society, as regards only to the best interests of Africa, will be to satisfy, by every reasonable method, all the friends of the cause, and all its enemies.

I remain, with great esteem and respect,

Your humble servant,

ISAAC ORR, Sec'y. A. E. S.

Demand for Educated Africans.

In addition to the well known extent and urgency of this demand, it ought to be mentioned, that the London Missionary Society sent to this country, some time ago, to procure educated Africans to go to Sierra Leone. Of course their application proved ineffectual.

of the will of General Kosciuszko, in Dec. 1800, at
strong of New Jersey, dated Washington, 22d January, 1801.

[Note.—In 1798 Gen. Kosciuszko made a bequest for the liberation and
education of Africans. In 1821 it amounted to \$12,000, and at the present
1840, does not differ much from \$23,000. A suit is now pending in the
United States Supreme Court, in which the bequest is claimed by the
testator's legal heirs and others. The result, it is said, is very dubious. In
this suit the request, instead of appearing as an example to excite others, is
likewise, appears rather to have hindered, or at least delayed, those ef-
forts for the African people, which communitarians have so vigorously re-
commended. It is exceedingly desirable that the reputation of Kosciuszko should
not bear the imputation of having injured the cause to which he dedicated
so much and devoted to attachment.]

One of the principal requisites of the will is, that the slaves should be
purchased and set free: but I consider that this would be substantially com-
plied with, if I can protect them from their masters after their liberation, by
freeing and educating them: And as I have from the first entertained that
I would take none that were not young enough to be susceptible of every
idea of their degradation, and all communication from their kindred and
associations, I suppose that their value as slaves would not be so great as
to operate strongly with those masters disposed to favor the experiment,
and that, with many of them, their freedom, support, and education, would
be a sufficiently valuable consideration.

The intention of the testator undoubtedly was, to make the objects of
his bounty not only free and happy, but useful to society. In considering
the kind of education best adapted to this purpose, one of my favorite
ideas has been, to instruct the children in agriculture and the mechanical
arts, in connexion with their literary education. But the first may be
may be, one or the other, always active in useful occupations; thereby
answering the purpose of amusement, and to apply each industry to
an education as shall be found on experiment to be best adapted to the
capacity.

It is a plan which is best in connection with the efforts to be made in the
economical plan. Almost every enterprise in this country, which fails of
success, owes its failure to embarking too liberally in speculation. Be-
fore the experiment is properly tested. I should think a new house, with
perhaps a single building, near some flourishing village, sufficient for the
experiment. The village would supply mechanics, who might be in-
duced, in such a cause, to give instruction in their art, for a very
moderate compensation. This plan can easily be enlarged if we find our
funds sufficient; and in any event, it is always more gratifying to be able to
extend, than to be obliged to contract, our enterprise.

Those children whom I would emancipate and educate with this fund,
I would purchase on the condition that after completing their education
they should be sent to the Colony in Africa, where they can certainly be
more useful than any where else, and where, perhaps it is not too great a

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